



Down Syndrome Achievement Centers
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Marc Portugal
National Director of Marketing and Communications
312-371-2660
mportugal@gigisplayhouse.org

**GET DOWN FOR DOWN SYNDROME IN SAN DIEGO:
GIGI'S PLAYHOUSE TO OPEN FIRST DOWN SYNDROME ACHIEVEMENT CENTER IN CALIFORNIA**

SAN DIEGO, CA (September 25, 2017): To expand achievement and acceptance for individuals with Down syndrome and their families in southern California: international nonprofit organization [GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers](#) announces its very first Playhouse location in southern California. To celebrate, GiGi's Playhouse will host its first ["Get Down for Down Syndrome" Dance Marathon](#) on the West Coast this Saturday September 30th, 2017 at Christ Lutheran Church. To kick off the event, GiGi's Playhouse founder and Chief Belief Officer Nancy Gianni as well as global ambassador and namesake of the organization, GiGi Gianni will attend and share opening remarks and well wishes. Festivities will include a great DJ, snacks, drinks, prizes, and more. **Proceeds from this inclusive family-friendly event will support the capital build out of a new GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Center location in San Diego; projected to serve hundreds of families as well as provide hundreds of new volunteer opportunities for local businesses, schools and members of the surrounding communities.** Funds raised at the event will also support free, purposeful therapeutic, educational and career development program for all age groups.

One such family includes Abdul Abdulghani, who was accepted into the United States in March. His family is now living in El Cajon, CA and Abdul works as an interpreter. In response to learning that a GiGi's Playhouse is coming to the San Diego area, Abdul said "I have to pinch myself to believe the reality of this blessing." Abdul intends to attend the Dance Marathon with his son, Tariq, 14 years old who has Down syndrome and is attending high school this year.

Richard Riley, a longtime GiGi's Playhouse volunteer and supporter, added "We recently spoke of (Abdul's) courage in working through the horrors of war to better the cause of freedom. I told him how we also move forward courageously in the disability community...together. That there is a world of Family awaiting his Family."

The San Diego start-up team is seeking a lease to replicate GiGi's Playhouse brick & mortar model in a high visibility commercial location. Each Playhouse serves as a beacon of acceptance and hope for families of individuals with Down syndrome; advanced by GiGi's Playhouse vision and campaign for global acceptance: Generation G.

From GiGi's Playhouse Founder and Chief Belief Officer Nancy Gianni: "I'm a big believer in miracles. But over time, I've learned that a miracle is not always pretty or easily seen; sometimes you have to search for them. Miracles may even be disguised in pain or tragedy. But it's what you do with the pain that brings the miracle to the forefront. It is finding that inner strength that propels you to action. Do not think you don't have that strength! You are born with it. We all have it; sometimes we just have to find it. Our start-up team in San Diego found their strength, opened their hearts and reached for the stars. Soon, families throughout southern California will experience the many gifts of a GiGi's Playhouse for themselves, and help send a beautiful message of acceptance for all."

The San Diego Dance Marathon event leads into 2017's Down Syndrome Awareness Month, when all GiGi's Playhouse locations will continue collaborating with mayors, state representatives and governors across the country to further proclaim October as Down Syndrome ACCEPTANCE Month in more communities. GiGi's Playhouse national network of Playhouses plans a series of meaningful "acts of kindness" to further educate, inspire and engage people about GiGi's Playhouse mission, programs, impacts and needs.

For more information about the very first "Get Down for Down Syndrome" Dance Marathon in California, please visit <https://gigisplayhouse.org/sandiego/dance-a-thon/>. GiGi's Playhouse is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization funded solely by the generosity of donations from individuals, businesses, foundations, and special events.

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[About GiGi's Playhouse](#)

GiGi's Playhouse is the ONLY network of Down Syndrome Achievement Centers; providing FREE, life-changing therapeutic, educational and career development programs for 40,000+ individuals of all ages. GiGi's Playhouse oversees 33 brick & mortar locations across the United States and in Mexico, as well as start-up teams in over 200 communities nationwide. By offering free purposeful programs and through our Generation G Campaign for global acceptance: families are EMPOWERED to maximize opportunities for daily achievement and lasting acceptance.

Each month approximately 250 new families join the national Playhouse network, representing a consistent monthly growth of 16%. In the last two years, 200 new communities inquired for a GiGi's Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Center to be established in their area. The significant growth and interest reflect a demand for programs that target the underserved population of more than 450,000 Americans living with Down syndrome.

To ensure lasting acceptance, GiGi's Playhouse shows the world what individuals with Down syndrome are truly capable of achieving as students, co-workers, volunteers, friends, and valued members of their communities. Down syndrome is not a disease and there is no cure. It is the largest chromosomal disability in the United States and yet, it is the least funded. At GiGi's Playhouse families are never alone. From a prenatal diagnosis to career skills, GiGi's Playhouse make a lifetime commitment to remain by their side. Families are empowered with all the tools their child needs to succeed! By breaking down barriers and changing the way the world accepts individuals with Down syndrome, GiGi's Playhouse foster a daily mindset of acceptance for everyone.